

In the Claims

Please cancel claims 1-5, 9, 11-14 and 29-31 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 25, 26 and 32 as indicated below, wherein any additions to the amended claims are underlined and any deletions to the amended claims are presented either within double brackets or as struckthrough text.

Please add new claims 33-45 as set forth below.

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Canceled)

10. (Canceled)

11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) A tool for connecting or disconnecting an optical tip to one of a borescope or endoscope, comprising:

a cylindrical, hollow body sized to fit over the optical tip;

an O-ring disposed within the body; and

at least one compressible arm cantilevered from the body,

wherein the at least one compressible arm is located over the O-ring so that when compressed the arm compresses the O-ring.

16. (Previously Presented) The tool of claim 15, wherein the O-ring is made from buna-n, and the body and each of the at least one compressible arm is made from a polymer.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) An endoscope apparatus comprising:
 - a hand piece;
 - an insertion tube connected to the hand piece, said insertion tube having a distal end;
 - an endoscope tip removably connected to the distal end of the insertion tube, said endoscope tip having an outer surface and further including at least one optical imaging component;
 - a tip tool having a tip tool body, wherein the tip tool body includes an opening to receive inserted over at least a portion of said outer surface of said endoscope tip; and
 - a compressible cantilevered arm adapted to engage the endoscope tip in order to remove the endoscope tip from the distal end of the insertion tube.
26. (Currently Amended) [[An]] The endoscope apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said opening of the tip tool is at least partially cylindrical to receive an outer cylindrical surface of the endoscope tip.
27. (Canceled)
28. (Canceled)
29. (Canceled)
30. (Canceled)

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) An endoscope apparatus comprising:
a hand piece;
an insertion tube connected to the hand piece, said insertion tube having a distal end;
an endoscope tip removably connected to the distal end of the insertion tube, said endoscope tip having an outer surface and further including at least one optical imaging component;
a tip tool having a tip tool body, wherein the tip tool body includes an opening to receive inserted over at least a portion of said outer surface of said endoscope tip; and
an O ring located inside the tip tool, wherein the O-ring is adapted to engage the endoscope tip in order to remove the endoscope tip from the distal end of the insertion tube.

33. (New) An endoscope apparatus comprising:

a hand piece;
an insertion tube connected to the hand piece, said insertion tube having a distal end;
an endoscope tip removably connected to the distal end of the insertion tube, said endoscope tip having an outer surface and further including at least one optical imaging component; and
a tip tool including a tip tool body fit over at least a portion of the endoscope tip, wherein the tip tool is adapted to releasably engage the endoscope tip.

34. The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein the tip tool includes a tip holding element disposed in contact with the tip tool body and adapted to releasably engage the endoscope tip.
35. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 34, wherein the tip holding element comprises at least one compressible element.
36. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 35, wherein the tip holding element comprises at least one arm cantilevered from the tip tool body.
37. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein the tip tool body is comprised of a material selected from the group consisting of a polymer, a ceramic, and a metal.
38. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 34, wherein the tip holding element is comprised of the same material as the tip tool body.
39. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein the tip tool includes a depth set mechanism sized to select the extent to which the tip tool body is inserted over the endoscope tip.
40. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein the tip tool is capable of storing the endoscope tip when the endoscope tip is not connected to the insertion tube.

41. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, further comprising identifying indicia disposed at a visible location on the tip tool body.
42. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 34, wherein the tip holding element is disposed within the tip tool body.
43. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein said endoscope tip is attached to the insertion tube via a threaded connection.
44. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein the hand piece includes means to articulate said distal end.
45. (New) The endoscope apparatus of claim 33, wherein the endoscope tip includes illumination means.